

2Nite Journal #4

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Introduction

The 2Nite Innovation Transfer Network has officially concluded its two-year European journey. Grounded in the Good Practice developed by the Lead Partner, the City of Turin (Italy), specifically its ToNite initiative, the network brought together Riga (Latvia), Sant Boi de Llobregat (Spain), Cluj-Napoca (Romania), and the Portuguese intermunicipal network Pentàgono Urbano.

Together, these cities established a shared, multidisciplinary understanding of urban safety and liveability that bridges day and night. The network shifted the paradigm away from punitive surveillance and hostile architecture toward active community presence, spatial justice, cultural activation, and social cohesion.

Every partner city has translated this collaborative methodology into tangible Investment and Continuity Plans. Supported by dedicated budgets and concrete actions, these plans ensure that the legacy of 2Nite will shape urban policies and public spaces for years to come.



This journal focuses on the 2Nite network's journey, which was built upon structured transnational exchanges, study visits, and peer-learning sessions across Europe. After the Torino Study Visit, which explored Turin's ToNite foundation and the mechanics of local proximity services, public grants, and Collaboration Pacts (Patti di Collaborazione); the Sant Boi de Llobregat Exchange, which examined youth leisure, nocturnal rights, and proximity dialogues aimed at shifting public perception from mere "coexistence" to "living together" and the Cluj-Napoca Exchange, which focused on bridging social divides in

rapidly transforming districts through storytelling, cultural activation, and neighborhood cohesion.

In the last semester of the project, partners engaged in two meetings:

- Braga: Investigated participatory ULG calls, youth engagement, and intermunicipal approaches to night-time public space activation.
- Riga Consolidated learnings, presented final Investment Plans, integrated the local "Riga Evening and Nighttime Forum," and conducted field visits.

Finally, the journal provides an overview of the main elements elaborated by partners within their Continuity and Investment Plans, which can be read in further depth directly in their published plans.



Braga Meeting

The Transnational Meeting of the URBACT 2Nite project was hosted by the Pentágono Urbano in Braga. The primary objectives of this gathering were to evaluate ongoing partner activities, sustain long-term community engagement, finalize urban revitalization investment plans, and lay the groundwork for a shared European manifesto advocating for the ethical, inclusive use of public spaces.

The institutional welcome in Braga set a definitive tone for the event: public space must not be viewed as a problem to be solved, but rather as a fertile territory for inclusion, safety, and urban vitality. The mission of urban planning is evolving from merely preserving physical buildings to preserving entire neighborhoods through deep collaboration between institutions and citizens.



Sustaining Engagement: Keeping ULGs Dynamic

A major hurdle in participatory urbanism is "participation fatigue," which frequently sets in after initial project funding and excitement wane. Led by Ad Hoc expert Laura Sobral, the consortium explored methodologies to keep URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) vibrant and inclusive. Key strategies to bypass traditional, often ineffective "open calls" focus on establishing a clear, shared vision while granting members genuine decision-making power, bringing activities directly into communities, leveraging trusted local networks, and using universal connectors such as food and celebrations to draw people in. To capture the voices of hard-to-reach profiles, Sobral introduced hands-on, trust-building methodologies.

These include Photo Voice, a technique allowing residents to visually document and share their lived experiences, and Bodystorming, which utilizes physical role-play to dissect and explore complex urban issues. Additionally, methods like Collaborative Graffiti and LEGO® Serious Play® offer playful, open-expression tools designed to inspire residents to actively contribute to neighborhood solutions rather than passively demanding municipal services.



Funding and Formalizing Cooperation

Moving from informal participation to structured shared ownership requires both administrative frameworks and strategic financial planning. To build effective cooperation ecosystems, the City of Torino shared its "Collaboration Pacts," which formalize the scope of cooperation among citizens, NGOs, and municipal bodies by outlining a joint plan specifying goals, resources, and timeframes. However, it was noted that while this model works well for small spaces and groups, it becomes highly complex when multiple actors have competing visions for the same urban area, requiring dedicated time, political will, and power-sharing to succeed.

Addressing the matchmaking game of urban funding, Ad Hoc expert Sabina Reichert guided partners on translating visions into funded actions, emphasizing the need for a "transformative mindset" where cities recognize they are proposing systemic urban transformations rather than just applying for grants. Because a single program rarely funds everything, cities must play a game of matchmaking by blending resources from local community donors for small pilots to EU and institutional funds for large-scale regeneration. Ultimately, investment plans must account for both tangible infrastructure and intangible actions—such as storytelling and community engagement—while remaining flexible enough to adapt if a specific funding stream falls through.

Legacy: The "Neighbourhood Democracy Academy"

The meeting concluded with peer reviews of partner investment plans and critical discussions regarding the network's legacy, leading the consortium to propose drafting an "Inclusive Public Space Pamphlet." This document serves as a European call to action that frames public spaces as a "neighbourhood democracy academy." It aims to address the ongoing tension between space privatization and public use, balance a thriving nighttime economy with residents' rights to silence, and advocate for ethical, accessible urban policies. Through this vision, the consortium established several core axioms: culture acts as a powerful governance tool where narratives shape behavior and urban perception; prevention is systematically more effective than control; safety is an organic outcome of vital, activated public spaces rather than a matter of forced surveillance; and spatial activation directly correlates with inclusion, as populated streets naturally become more welcoming for diverse groups.



Site visit in Famalicão

The afternoon field visit to Vila Nova de Famalicão provided concrete examples of how spatial transformation and community collaboration directly enhance the perception of safety.

Urban Space	Previous State	Regenerated State
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Transport Coordination Centre	An empty, non-functional area where people felt unsafe.	A 24-hour hub connecting 500 buses, featuring a waiting room, shops, a café, municipal offices, and student study rooms, ensuring a safe flow of people from 6:00 PM to midnight.
Lameiras Residents' Association	A 1980s social housing complex (220 apartments) plagued by vandalism and perceived as highly unsafe.	Revitalized via a strictly bottom-up approach; residents built a kindergarten, school (up to age 13), social center, church, and elderly day center, transforming it into a safe, multicultural area with community event spaces.
Market and Public Square	An unsafe parking lot lacking pedestrian paths or accessible routes.	A redesigned, barrier-free pedestrian zone featuring greenery and fountains, successfully supporting local produce markets and functional citizen use.

Key learning points

1. Sustaining Community Engagement Through Inclusive Tools: To combat "participation fatigue" and move beyond ineffective open calls, cities must actively grant URBACT Local Group (ULG) members genuine decision-making power and meet communities in their own spaces. Engaging hard-to-reach profiles requires hands-on, trust-building tools, such as *Photo Voice*, *Bodystorming*, *Collaborative Graffiti*, and *LEGO® Serious Play®*, to empower residents as co-creators of neighborhood solutions rather than passive recipients of municipal services.
2. Financing Urban Transformation via the "Matchmaking Game": Translating a vision into concrete actions requires a "transformative mindset" rather than a mere grant-seeking approach. Because no single program funds an entire urban strategy, cities must play a "matchmaking game", blending local community donations for small pilot projects with larger EU and institutional funds for long-term physical regeneration, while ensuring plans account for both tangible infrastructure and lower-cost, high-impact intangible actions like community storytelling.
3. Reframing Public Space as a "Neighbourhood Democracy Academy": Urban safety is an organic byproduct of vibrant, activated public spaces rather than forced surveillance or punitive control. Culture functions as a powerful governance tool to shape perceptions, and spatial activation directly correlates with inclusion: when streets and public squares are continuously animated with community life, they naturally become safer and more welcoming for diverse groups.

Riga Final Conference

The final conference of the URBACT 2Nite network took place in Riga, Latvia, on the 9th and 10th of July 2026, marking the official culmination of a two-year European journey. Organized in close collaboration with the Municipality of Riga, the two-day event integrated the local "Riga Evening and Nighttime Forum" with the official URBACT network event, bringing together local stakeholders, municipal representatives, and international urban experts to reflect on global nighttime trends, local achievements, and the long-term legacy of the project. The gathering served as a space to consolidate network learnings, unveil final Investment and Continuity Plans, and celebrate the collaborative connections built across Turin, Riga, Sant Boi de Llobregat, Cluj-Napoca, and the Portuguese Pentágono Urbano network.

Nighttime planning

The conference opened at the Splendid Palace movie theatre with welcoming remarks from the Mayor of Riga, Viesturs Kleinbergs, and City Council Representative Mārtiņš Eņģelis. They emphasized the specific context of Northern European winters, where dark falls as early as 5:00 PM for nearly half the year, underscoring the urgent need to balance a vibrant nocturnal city with residents' rights to peace and rest. The first morning set a global perspective on nighttime governance, featuring insights from VibeLab and the Cities After Dark network. These sessions defined nightlife broadly, encompassing all evening, nighttime, and early morning interactions between 6:00 PM and 6:00 AM, and argued that cities can no longer afford to ignore nighttime governance. Riga highlighted its own recent achievements after 420 days of policy evolution, including expanded night bus services, seasonal outdoor seating, winter event grants, and a comprehensive five-pillar nighttime roadmap.



Following the global overviews, partner cities shared executive updates on their URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) and participatory methodologies. Turin illustrated how its ToNite model evolved into active civic empowerment, while Riga presented its work in the Purvciems district, where residents moved from initial skepticism to active ownership through collaborative mapping, explanatory walks, and neighborhood hackathons. Sant Boi de Llobregat explained its efforts to bridge perceived insecurity and youth leisure through multi-departmental dialogues. Pentágono Urbano shared its intermunicipal experiment with participatory ideation, and Cluj-Napoca outlined how storytelling and cultural activations helped unify long-term residents and newcomers in the transforming Iris neighborhood.



The afternoon of the first day featured a series of localized experience reports that highlighted diverse dimensions of nighttime liveability. Centre MARTA addressed bystander responsibility and women's safety in public spaces, while the Apeirons association detailed physical accessibility obstacles that emerge after dark for people with visual and physical disabilities. The ecological organization Ecosoul brought an environmental lens to light pollution and urban bat populations, and Homo Novus presented performative artistic walks exploring emotional boundaries of urban security. Representatives from cultural NGOs, the Constitutional Court of Latvia, and youth organization Klubs "Māja" further discussed the legal compromises between quietude and entertainment, alongside youth demands for decentralized nighttime culture and improved public transit. Day 1 concluded with evening explanatory walks through subcultural creativity hubs, such as Digital Art House, Kimmel Kvartāls, and Lauvas Nams, and nocturnal bat-watching tours.

Public space interventions

The second day shifted to Riga City Hall, centering on formal municipal policies, funding

mechanisms, and long-term continuity. Partner cities presented their official Investment and Continuity Plans, demonstrating how pilot actions will be institutionalized beyond the project's lifetime. Turin presented its IMPATTO measure, funded via ESF+, and its four-dimension Impact Assessment Framework. Riga detailed plans for the Marsa Gatve Community Centre, courtyard redevelopments, and the "Masters of Riga" social cohesion program. Sant Boi de Llobregat committed permanent municipal budget lines to four proximity youth projects, Cluj-Napoca institutionalized participatory neighborhood budgeting and continuous stakeholder dialogues, and Pentágono Urbano showcased permanent civic funding models in Braga and Famalicão.



The conference wrapped up with a comprehensive field study in Riga's Purvciems district, examining real-world applications of public space co-management. Participants visited the municipally owned NGO House, which supports around 60 local associations monthly with free facilities, equipment, and training. The tour continued through the Soviet-era ex-Minsk commercial block and the former Rigonda nightclub, exploring the transformation of local retail and nighttime entertainment centers. The visit concluded at Marsa gatve 8, a former kindergarten slated to become a multi-generational community center, and Dreilīņkalns, a remediated 35-meter urban landfill undergoing functional studies to serve as a safe, green public park.

Key learnings

1. The overarching legacy of the Riga Final Conference lies in its formalization of a new urban paradigm that redefines nighttime security, public space management and civic participation. Throughout two years of transnational exchange, the 2Nite network demonstrated that urban safety can no longer be addressed through isolated policing or hostile architecture. Instead, true security is an organic

byproduct of vibrant, activated public spaces that foster continuous social presence, spatial justice, and intergenerational community life. Cities must treat the period between 6:00 PM and 6:00 AM as a strategic dimension of public policy where mobility, culture, public health, equality, and space co-management intersect.

2. A central learning from the Riga gathering is that sustainable urban regeneration is fundamentally built on trust rather than physical infrastructure alone. To overcome resident apathy and participation fatigue in fragmented neighborhoods, municipal authorities must grant citizens genuine decision-making power and meet communities in their everyday spaces. Hands-on, trust-building tools, such as photo documentation, physical bodystorming, and collaborative creative workshops, allow residents to become active co-designers of neighborhood solutions. Furthermore, managing public space inherently requires navigating competing rights, necessitating continuous dialogue and compromise between cultural expression, economic activity, and the right to silence.
3. To guarantee long-term continuity, cities must bridge the gap between short-term urban experimentation and permanent policy. Establishing structured impact assessment models that measure project generativity, spatial animation, civic participation, and overall liveability gives municipalities empirical proof of the value of community-led initiatives. This evidence is crucial for securing political commitment and assembling multi-source financial frameworks, blending local community contributions with national and European resources, such as ESF+ and regional development funds, to support both tangible physical works and vital social programming.
4. Ultimately, the 2Nite network established a set of core axioms framing public spaces as neighborhood academies of democracy. Culture functions as a vital governance tool where positive local narratives shape urban behavior and alter perception. Prevention and active community presence are systematically more effective than reactive surveillance, as populated, lively streets naturally become safer and more inclusive environments for all citizens. As the partner cities transition toward implementing their Investment Plans, the methodologies, partnerships, and shared vision developed through 2Nite will continue to guide European policies toward more liveable, human-centered public spaces day and night.

Continuity and Investment Plans

Turin

Torino's Continuity Plan outlines the city's strategic transition toward becoming a "City of Proximity" rooted in the 15-minute city framework. Evolving from the legacy of the EU-funded ToNite project, Torino reframes urban security away from traditional policing toward public liveability, community activation, and sustained social presence. The intervention targets peripheral, fragile areas such as Barriera di Milano, Aurora, Mirafiori, and San Salvario, converting public parks, pedestrian streets, and squares into inclusive community nodes.

The operational backbone of this transition is the IMPATTO program, funded through the National Operational Programme for Metropolitan Cities (PN Metro Plus). IMPATTO supports third-sector non-profit organizations to deliver localized proximity services, cultural programming, and social care to disadvantaged groups. The program addresses three core challenges: re-activating underused or perceived unsafe locations, animating community hubs adjacent to existing facilities like schools or libraries, and providing alternative nighttime cultural options outside over-congested nightlife zones. The overall public grant budget stands at €2.4 million, providing up to €240,000 per initiative across 11 selected projects involving 65 non-profit organizations over a three-year timeline from 2025 to 2027.

Implementation began in 2025 with the launch of the 11 multi-partner project hubs, utilizing tactical urbanism, mobile advice desks, open-air culture, and social assistance services. Continuous co-governance is maintained through URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) across decentralized city tables to resolve operational challenges and share resources. The city engages in peer-learning exchanges with European partner cities while institutionalizing civic space management through formal Collaboration Pacts signed between district municipalities and local associations.

First-year achievements as of June 2026 demonstrate significant impact, including 3,012 hours of one-on-one social care support delivered to 836 citizens across 883 days. Over 6,500 hours of recurring structured activities were hosted, alongside 372 public events reaching more than 16,000 participants. The ecosystem generated 239 new external partnerships, 45 new project proposals, 3 formal Collaboration Pacts, and engaged 148 continuous volunteers, aligning local outcomes with the New European Bauhaus vision of sustainability, inclusion, and beauty.

Cluj-Napoca

The "Reconnecting Iris" initiative in Cluj-Napoca focuses on addressing the fear of dark and underused public spaces in the rapidly growing, post-industrial Iris district through targeted social and governance interventions rather than major physical redevelopments. The primary goal of the project is to strengthen perceived evening safety and neighborhood cohesion while bridging the social divide between long-term residents and newly arriving populations. To ensure long-term sustainability, Cluj-Napoca is institutionalizing community intelligence by embedding participatory tools—such as local storytelling, citizen diplomacy, and perception monitoring protocols—directly into the city's municipal governance frameworks.

Financially, the direct project budget allocates approximately €27,000 from URBACT and local funds to support baseline research, storytelling workshops, and pilot frameworks. For long-term continuity, an estimated post-project funding strategy of €60,000 to €85,000 will be drawn from municipal and European Union sources to handle procurement mechanisms and territorial upscaling. These social actions are closely aligned with broader public physical investments totaling over €2.37 million, which cover lighting system upgrades, green space rehabilitation in Parcul Feroviarilor, cycling infrastructure expansions, and CCTV installations.

The structured implementation plan began in January 2026 with baseline safety perception surveys and participatory spatial mapping. Between February and April 2026, qualitative evidence was gathered through storytelling workshops designed to map neighborhood assets and reduce social distance between demographics. Public testing of these social activations took place in May and June 2026 via tailored cultural programming at District City Hall and Parcul Feroviarilor during the Cluj Days festival. During the summer of 2026, identified resident needs are being matched with existing community resources alongside minor spatial improvements. The final phase focuses on scaling these protocols to the broader metropolitan level via the Urban-Rural Hub and introducing public procurement options for citizen perception services.

Through these efforts, Cluj-Napoca expects a longitudinal increase in perceived night-time safety and a stronger sense of neighborhood belonging across diverse age and gender groups. The initiative will result in a standardized Community Storytelling Toolkit utilized across various municipal departments. Furthermore, it establishes a formal Community Intelligence Ecosystem managed by the Citizen Information Centre Department to continuously inform future urban design choices.

Sant Boi de Llobregat

Sant Boi de Llobregat is implementing "The Caring City at Night" to transform urban nightlife safety by addressing uncivil behavior, perceived insecurity, and gender-based harassment. A key objective is fostering youth and intergenerational harmony by shifting traditional leisure activities into earlier hours, effectively recovering the night through late-afternoon programming to balance young people's right to leisure with older residents' right to rest. The strategy seamlessly combines large-scale urban regeneration projects with social proximity initiatives to create safe, welcoming public spaces.

The overall investment for this comprehensive plan stands at €11,650,000. Financing is structured through a co-financing split where €4,640,000 is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to cover 40% of infrastructure and digital initiatives. The remaining €7,010,000 is supplied by the municipality's own budget, which funds physical construction alongside a dedicated €50,000 allocation reserved specifically for youth engagement, community storytelling, and proximity grants.

Execution of the plan started with an early-phase Testing Action and Connection Event that brought together local youth, police officers, nightlife business owners, and non-profit organizations to form a unified vision for nighttime governance. Following this, the municipality formalized a permanent Youth Nightlife Table to serve as a co-governance body tasked with reducing intergenerational friction and guiding policy decisions. Yearly calls for proposals are being launched to grant funds to local entities offering evening cultural, social, and athletic events. Concurrently, four major Integrated Action Plan (PAI) urban regeneration projects are being executed using gender-sensitive urban design, such as exploratory marches, improved street lighting, and clear sightlines across the Marianao-Reconecta accessibility project, a new community library hub, the L'Olivera-DigitALL 24/7 study space with M7 app integration, and the Parellada inclusive sports park.

The anticipated impact of the project includes a 25% increase in women reporting feeling very safe when walking alone at night. The Youth Nightlife Table will maintain a permanent operational standing with at least 50% female or non-binary representation. Additionally, the physical transformation of the four PAI sites is expected to yield significantly higher community activation and public space usage.

Riga

Riga's intervention strategy, titled "Activating Purvciems," targets the dense Soviet-era apartment block district of Purvciems to overcome systemic challenges such as missing "eyes on the street," a lack of human-scale spaces, and social isolation among residents. The main objective is to rebuild community ties and transform transit-only outdoor areas into cozy, communal, and safe neighborhood meeting points. Drawing inspiration from Turin's ToNite model, the city relies on a balanced approach that pairs physical courtyard upgrades with immaterial, community-bonding actions.

The implementation of the Purvciems plan is anchored by URBACT Innovation Transfer Network funding, supplemented directly by municipal resources from the Riga City Council. The delivery model also relies on strategic civil society partnerships, drawing support from local non-governmental organizations and international institutions such as the British Council in Latvia.

The intervention roadmap began with comprehensive safety and environmental assessments, including 108 street surveys conducted by the municipal police and spatial assessments by the State Police across target pilot locations like the undeveloped Andromeda Courtyard. Targeted explanatory walks were subsequently carried out with women, youth, and senior citizens to identify specific spatial factors driving night-time insecurity. Grassroots activation initiatives were then introduced, featuring educational architectural tours, disposable camera distributions to capture local "coziness," and stairwell engagement campaigns across individual apartment buildings. Before initiating physical construction, community events such as jam tastings, solar-powered tree jar painting, and participatory mapping workshops were held in the courtyards to generate local momentum. These activities directly inform the physical upgrades being made to pilot spaces like the Andromeda Courtyard.

The project expects to achieve a marked improvement in how residents perceive their personal safety, driven by strengthened neighborly relations and mutual trust. Previously neglected, municipally owned courtyards will be transformed into active, co-designed public gathering spaces. Ultimately, the initiative aims to establish a repeatable model for boosting civic participation and neighborhood pride across high-density residential districts.

Pentágono Urbano

The "Belonging Creates Safety" (BCS) Investment Plan, created by Associação Pentágono Urbano under the URBACT IV 2NITE network, is a multi-city civic innovation program serving the Portuguese municipalities of Barcelos, Braga, Guimarães, Vila Nova de Famalicão, and Viana do Castelo. Inspired by Turin's ToNite practice, the mechanism departs from top-down surveillance and heavy physical infrastructure. Instead, it adopts a human-centered approach that builds safety through social presence, civic engagement, and evening public space activation.

The program focuses on re-activating underused spaces during evening and nighttime hours through cultural programming, tactical urbanism, and youth initiatives. It empowers civil society organizations, informal collectives, and residents to co-design and co-manage placemaking projects. Governance is structured to shift municipalities from sole managers to facilitators of a polycentric intermunicipal network, reducing perceived insecurity by fostering trust and social interaction.

The 5-year implementation plan operates on a total budget of €250,000, representing an annual cost of €50,000, with €25,000 specifically reserved to support pilot phase projects. Funding is assembled through municipal co-funding, Associação Pentágono Urbano, ERDF / NORTE 2030, European grants, private sponsorships, and in-kind contributions from local stakeholders.

The rollout follows a four-phase framework. Phase one in 2026 centers on governance setup, eligibility definitions, and ecosystem mobilization through URBACT Local Groups. Phase two in 2027 launches open calls across the five municipalities aimed at non-profits, youth groups, and informal collectives. Phases two and three provide technical mentoring and speed-design sessions to refine project feasibility, leading to a public Demo-Day for collective pitching and evaluation. Finally, phase four in 2027 sees the rollout and monitoring of selected pilot initiatives in real urban settings.

The expected outcomes include an increase in grant applications and active involvement from informal collectives and youth groups. The plan aims to drive higher evening foot traffic and recurring community activities in underutilized spaces. Ultimately, the program targets measurable improvements in perceived safety, reduced urban isolation, and the creation of transferable policy methodologies across the intermunicipal network.